



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Teenager Convicted in Near-Fatal Shooting at July 4<sup>th</sup> Party - His Gunfire Led to More Violence, Injuries -**

WASHINGTON - Derrick Phillips, 19, was found guilty by a jury today for his role in a shooting at a July 4, 2009 block party that resulted in five people being wounded by gunfire, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Phillips, of the District, was found guilty in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia of aggravated assault while armed with a firearm, possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, and carrying a pistol without a license. When he is sentenced on January 6, 2011, by the Honorable Ronna L. Beck, Phillips will face a mandatory minimum sentence of five years of incarceration and a maximum sentence of 30 years.

According to the government's evidence, on July 4, 2009, Phillips confronted another young man at a block party in the 600 block of 46<sup>th</sup> Place SE, Washington, D.C. Phillips and the other man were associated with rival neighborhood crews that had a protracted history of violence. The exact nature of the dispute is unknown. Phillips initially left the party after arguing with the other man, but he returned to the party soon after midnight, on July 5, 2009. More than 200 people were present when Phillips returned.

Phillips sought out the young man, brandished a handgun, and fired repeatedly at the man as they stood only a few feet apart. The victim suffered five gunshot wounds. He was rushed to Washington Hospital Center, where trauma surgeons were able to save his life.

Several other guests at the party had firearms and reacted by firing at Phillips. Phillips and those with him returned fire. All told, more than 29 shots were fired in the middle of the crowded street and an additional four people, including a nine-year-old girl, were struck in the crossfire. Fortunately, all of the victims survived their injuries.

In announcing the jury's verdict, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the work of Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Detectives Andrea Latson and Eric Roche, and retired MPD Detective

Kevin Tighe, who did an exemplary job investigating the case. He also praised the work of Crime Scene Technicians Nate Davis and Martin Fosso, who processed the crime scene and gathered valuable forensic evidence.

U.S. Attorney Machen also praised the efforts of U.S. Secret Service Special Agents Melissa Blake and Robert Jones and the entire Litigation Support Unit for their invaluable assistance preparing the case for trial. Finally, U.S. Attorney Machen expressed his special appreciation to Assistant U.S. Attorneys Adam B. Schwartz and Allison Barlotta who tried the case, and Bryan Seeley who indicted the case.

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